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ABSTRACT

On the basis of a model established for the teaching of various linguistic and writing classes, a collaborative learning model was used for class instruction and for the training of teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL). The model involved: (1) trainee presentations based on the explanation of material from assigned readings in the text(s); (2) daily quizzes of the material from the assigned reading; and (3) peer grading of the daily quizzes and exams with the instructor spot checking for accuracy of grading. Student attitudinal surveys revealed a positive perception of student teachers on the whole. These positive perceptions were especially evident in those measures focusing on the involvement that students have in their own educational process. Perhaps an even greater positive aspect of the collaborative learning model was the thoroughness with which the teacher-trainees mastered the subject matter, and the discipline that it introduced into the educational process, manifesting itself in better classroom attendance. Future studies of other collaborative learning processes should reveal more about the nature of student-teacher interaction and better explain current findings. (Author/GLR)

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Running Head:
Collaborative Learning

Collaborative Learning in a TESL Training Class

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Abstract

On the basis of a model established for the teaching of various linguistic and writing classes, a collaborative learning model was used for the teaching of a class for the training of teachers of English as a second language. This model involved 1. Trainee presentations based on the explanation of material from assigned readings in the text(s). 2. Daily quizzes of the material from the assigned reading. 3. Peer grading of the daily quizzes and exams with the instructor spot checking for accuracy of grading. Student attitudinal surveys revealed a positive perception of student-teachers on the whole toward the conduct of the class as measured during its conduct. In particular, these positive perceptions were especially evident in those measures focusing on the involvement that students have in their own educational process. Perhaps an even greater positive aspect of the collaborative learning model used here is the thoroughness with which the teacher-trainees mastered the subject matter and the discipline that it introduced into the educational process

manifesting itself in better classroom attendance. Future classes and attempts to sample other aspects of the educational process involved in collaborative learning will, no doubt, throw more light on the nature of student-teacher interaction and the reasons for the findings in this study.

After having been involved with the training of TESOL teachers for almost one quarter of a century, it one day occurred to me that Gattegno's "... teaching should be subordinated to learning ..." might have relevance for the teacher training class. Furthermore, as one psychologist noted: "... active learning is more effective than passive but we do not follow our own counsel when we teach" (Wrigley 1973:5 as quoted in Whitman 1988:3). Besides this, I had often facetiously commented that the classroom was the last outpost of dictatorship in American democracy. It seemed to me odd that one of the largest of the Western Democracies should expect its citizens to exercise the right of 'free people' in a democratic society but should give them largely dictatorial models for their behavior. So then, in an effort to follow Gettegno's dictum and to democratize the classroom I started experimenting with what is generally known as collaborative learning, but in the projects that I designed might more properly be called collaborative teaching.

In any case, there are many different definitions of 'collaborative learning.' Brufee defines it as that kind of learning in which the teacher surrenders all control of the class to the students. As he states,

> "... The work of non-autonomous groups cannot reasonably be called collaborative learning ... classroom group work is non-autonomous whenever instructors do not step back from the groups of working students, but rather 'sit in' on them or 'hover,' predetermining the outcome of the work and maintaining the students' direct dependency on the teacher's presence, resources and expertise." (1987:46)

Brufee created this definition on the basis of the fact that knowledge is a social construct, shared by members of a society, but he neglects the fact that even in his classes some knowledge must be brought in on the basis of authority since it is not shared by his students when they first enter the class. Nevertheless, the use of the term 'collaborative' here does not imply the kind of learning/teaching situation suggested by Brufee. Rather the definition of Sheridan (1989) fits better. "In the collaborative process the teacher's influence recedes and becomes more

indirect. The teacher becomes an organizer and facilator instead of the central actor, and relinquishes the role of authority figure." (1989:49)

The model for collaborative learning used in an English TESL class was first developed in 1979 to alleviate the problems of grading compositions in a freshman English class during a five week summer school. Such a course required the grading of 60 or more themes per week. As a result, peer grading and a system requiring the students to run the class were utilized. The satisfactory nature of the experience was reported in the Arizona English Bulletin a year later. That such a system could be used for the teaching of TESL methods was not certain, however, since teaching freshman English centers on the development of a skill and it is in skill development classes that collaborative (or cooperative) learning has been used so effectively.

Review of Literature

A review of the literature reveals that collaborative learning is used most frequently in skill-based classes. For example, D. J. Magin (1982) trained a group of university students in decision making using collaborative learning. Hester (1984) used collaborative learning to teach English as a second language, again focusing on the acquisition of a skill as did Bassano and Christison (1988) and Bejerano (1987). Collaborative learning

or peer teaching is used in language acquisition in a bilingual class by Chesterfield and Chesterfield (1985), Heller and Barker (1988), and by Perez (1979), in the acquisition of language communication skills by Celani (1979), in the acquisition of dialogue skills in the foreign language class (Manthey 1987), in teaching survival skills to retarded children (Snell 1979) and in imparting teaching skills to English as a second language teachers (Plaister 1977). Similarly, peer teaching has been used in the teaching of reading skills (Larson and others 1984, Mocker 1975) and in the impartation of orthographic skills (Lambiotte and others 1988). Cooperative learning has even been used for building a positive attitude in the foreign language classroom (Gunderson and Johnson 1980) as well as in developing foreign language skills with college students (Ulrich 1982) and with children (Cooper and others 1982). Peer teaching or collaborative learning has been used to enhance the student's capacity for self-direction and intellectual responsibility (Welds 1986). The same kind of teaching / learning has been used to develop courtroom skills of expert witnesses and lawyers (McCreary 1977).

As the above survey would indicate, peer teaching and collaborative (or cooperative) learning occur most frequently in skill based classes. They do not occur so frequently in classes dealing with the impartation (or acquisition) of knowledge. In fact, one report dealing with conveying knowledge from teacher to

student does so under the title of 'lecture' with a subheading for collaborative learning (Oddi 1983). They do occur, however, in the area of knowledge acquisition under the general heading of peer tutoring. As such, one of the proponents boasts that peer tutoring is used in "... increasingly esoteric subject areas" (Topping, 1988:5) and starts the list with foreign language teaching and follows it with the teaching of writing and reading (1988:19). Besides this, Wagner (1982:231) reports on a project in which "... arithmetic skills ..." were effectively conveyed through peer teaching. Again, all of the latter are skill based areas.

The Collaborative Class

On the first day of class, students were given the following instructions with the outline of the course.

8/29/89 ENG 485: Teaching English as a Second Language JWNey

Requirements of the course: (1) Complete a weekly quiz over material in the readings and from the discussions, (2) do peer evaluation of the quizzes of classmates, (3) give presentations on readings for the course from the readings in the texts: A. P. R. Howatt, A History of English Language Teaching (London: Oxford University Press, 1984) and Michael H. Long and Jack C. Richards Methodology in TESOL (Rowley MA: Newbury House, 1987) & Kinko's packet (# 150), (4) complete a mid term and final exam, (5) build a folder of materials available for the teaching of English as a sec-

ond language from advertising brochures obtained from publishers (for addresses, see Literary Market Place (LMP) or Books in Print), and (6) help to form a committee for the appeal of all grades. All quizzes will be scored on a five-point scale; there will be no make-ups. In the event of absence, a score of 4.201 will be awarded for the first absence; 2.01 for every absence thereafter. Five extra points will be awarded for oral reports (the presentations in (3) above). The exams will be graded on a twenty point scale. The instructor will grade 1/4 of the daily quizzes of the students in the class on a given day on a rotating basis and will award grades to the grading of peers. Each member of the class will be required to fill out an attitudinal survey once every three weeks; for each attitudinal survey the student will be awarded 2 points. No surveys will be accepted on dates other than the due date. The final grade in the course will be awarded on the basis of the grades on each quiz, the grading of the quizzes, the oral reports, attitudinal surveys and the grades for the exams. All quizzes and tests and grading exercises are closed book; students must answer and grade quizzes or tests on the basis of their knowledge of the subject -- **NOT** on the basis of their ability to find answers in a book or notes.

The Conduct of the Class

Thus, the course included the following features:

1. Student presentations based on the explanation of material from assigned readings in the text(s).

2. Daily quizzes of the material from the assigned reading.

3. Peer grading of the daily quizzes with instructor grading 25% to 30% of the quizzes, assigning grades to those quizzes and grading the accuracy of the peer evaluations.

During the first of these (1) the instructor sat at the back of the lecture room taking note of the student presentations which explained text material to peers. In the class, there were two fulbright scholars, one from Indonesia and one from the West Bank, two Koreans, one Hungarian, one scholar from Spain, four Japanese, one Yemenese, one student from India and a dozen American students. Many of these had experience teaching in TESL prior to their enrollment in the MA program at Arizona State University. From the amount of their particiation in the class, it would appear that they were more free to offer their views on various aspects of TESL at the instigation of student teachers / lecturers than at the instigation of the university instructor. Besides this, in preparation for writing two quiz questions on the blackboard requiring essay answers, the instructor noted the student-lecturer's emphasis on material from the reading which served as the basis for student presentation and interaction. Students were given study questions for the mid-term and final from the first day of class so that student-lecturers could use these in determining the focus for the individual class.

Grading of Quizzes and Tests

For the third of these (3 above), students and teacher alike awarded 5 points to papers which had no serious flaws. Errors reduced the total grade by .10 or more. Generally, the scores fell between 4 and 5 for both the student graders and the instructor. As a result of this, in a correlation analysis using the Kendall Tau B, student and teacher grades correlated at a statistically significantl lever over every grading period and for the midterm and final exams. (See Tables 1 , 2 and 3.)

Insert Tables 1, 2 and 3 about here

Not only did the instructor grade the paper of approximately 1/4 of the students on each quiz but also graded the grading of the students on the 25% papers graded. Over the semester, the students graded 617 quizzes; the instructor graded 156 or 25% of the quizzes, exacatly the amount targeted 25%.

Reporting of Grades

All comments were recorded on 4 x 6 notepad paper so that the graders could view the comments of the instructor on the grading after each student-author (the gradee) had examined the grading and the comments. As a result of this and the discussion

above, it should be apparent from the foregoing that record keeping became a major task in this type of teaching. To expedite this task, a computer program was written in Quick Basic that not only stored the grades but also adjusted the total score on the basis of each student's average and provided all the students with a weekly average of their scores. Thus, the students' records might look like the following: (See Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

The computer output for each quiz and each student was as follows: (See Table 5)

Insert Table 5 about here

To arrive at the Adjusted Total, the computer, in effect, took every '0' in the record and wrote in the student's average to compensate for the fact that not every student had the same number of grades. (In the program '0' does not equal the arithmetic

'zero;' it is read as 'no score.') Thus, students received an daily (or weekly) progress report in the form of the computer printout in Table 3 above.

The Curriculum

The curriculum for the class was based on a historical and a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject matter from a number of different sources. The first part of the class dealt with A. P. R. Howatt, A History of English Language Teaching (London: Oxford University Press, 1984). This text presents a history of language teaching from the classical period to the present. It focusses on the history of English as a second language teaching from the renaissance to the present from a largely British viewpoint. It was supplemented with material from Darian which has a more American focus. The second part of the class dealt with Michael H. Long and Jack C. Richards, Methodology in TESOL (Rowley MA: Newbury House, 1987). This text presents a well-rounded view of ESL teaching methods with a focus on the different aspects of TESL teaching such as aural comprehension, the teaching of grammar or pronunciation and the teaching of reading and writing in the ESL class. It was supplemented with recent articles by Lightbown, Samimy and Spada. Besides this, the students were required to work through Stevick's Workbook in Language Teaching on their own. The latter dealt largely with articulatory phonetics.

The Results

Mastery of Subject Matter

Not only did the students in this section cover the subject from a broadening point of view but they also covered it well. If an arbitrary point such a score of 18 on the final of the student grades is set for mastery of 80% of the material in the class then 21 students or 80% of the class attained this level of mastery on the students' grading scale for the final. Similarly, since the instructor's grading scale was somewhat lower than the students' (See Table 3: Student Mean = 19.175; Teacher mean = 18.304), the score should be set at 17 on the teacher's grades yielding 22 students or 84% of the class. Similarly, if the 80% mastery level is set at 4.8 out of 5 points on the daily quizzes as they were graded by students, then 81% of the students reached this level on a daily basis as measured by student grades; if the 80% criterion level is set at the same level for the teacher graded daily quizzes then 72% of the students reached this level of accomplishment on a daily basis. Thus, from the instructor's point of view, no students failed the midterm or the final although, of the 32 students initially enrolled in the class 25 took the final.

Attendance

Similarly, the absentee rate in the class was negligible. In the total number of student class sessions (1 session per week over 15 weeks x 26 students = 390), only 20 absences were

recorded which is a little more than one half of one percent of the total. Fully one half of the class hours recorded no absences at all. Previous classes taught by the lecture method recorded up to a 30% absentee rate.

Student Attitudes

For this study, as for previous studies of this nature, attitudinal surveys were administered to the students to determine the degree of satisfaction or dis-satisfaction that they encountered. These surveys used a conventional scale based on the Osgood, Suci and Tannebaum semantic differential as modified by Lodahl and Kejner to elicit student attitude towards the TESL methods class. The response categories were scored from '1' (strongly agree) to '5' (strongly disagree) as in the study by Knoop (1980) and subjected to various kinds of statistical analysis such as reliability tests, correlations and other measures of similarity (or difference). From this analysis of the weekly attitudinal surveys an interesting trend became apparent. (See Appendix I for a copy of the survey.) From the beginning, students were on the whole in favor of the structure of the class with a mean score of 2.5 on the survey. But their attitudes turned slightly negative from the third week to the eighth week (the week after the mid term exam) as evidenced by the mean score of 2.8 on the attitudinal survey. From that point, their attitudes towards differing facets of the class improved up to the week before the final exam when it reached its most positive point, an average of 2.3. For a comparable junior level grammar

class, student attitudes were quite similar though slightly more negative towards the end of the class, but still staying positive throughout the term. (See Figure 1.)

Insert Figure 1 about here

Besides this, it is interesting to note that that three of the items which were among the most positively viewed (I, E and C) dealt with activities which required the most student involvement (grading quizzes (C and E) and writing the daily quizzes (I) with means from 2.0 to 2.4. (See Table 6.) The most positively viewed aspect of the class was the daily reports of grades (Item H - mean 2.0). With one exception the least liked features of the

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Insert Table 6 about here

---

class dealt with the instructor's intervention in the process items (A, B and G) with means from 2.95 to 2.65. Only one other item shows a tendancy towards a negative perception, item D,

dealing with individual student frustration, which was the most negatively viewed of any item in this class with a mean of 3.1 and has been among the more negative of any items in every class using peer teaching with this instructor. However, scores in the range of 3.1 to 3.9 are in the middle of the scale and indicate the neutral position. For these scores to occur, as many students would have to show positive perceptions as negative perceptions. (See Table 6.) Thus it should be apparent from the above that there are three factors involved in the student marking of the attitudinal survey: (1) student involvement which receives the most positive rating (Items E, C and I), (2) instructor involvement which receives the most negative rating (Items A, B, and G, and (3) an unidentifiable residue, items F and D. This impression is confirmed with a factor analysis where all of the variance is accounted for by the factors clustering around E, B and F. (See Table 7.)

Insert Table 7 about here

Thus, the most important finding from the attitudinal surveys centers on the fact that students prefer the student-centered activities to instructor-centered activities and that they like to receive daily grade reports.

Conclusion

The collaborative learning model used for in the class described here for the training of teachers of ESL proved successful in the judgement of the instructor because peer teachers proved to be very good at extracting common experiences in TESL from fellow students.

The positive perceptions that students have of their involvement in the educational process is an important finding in this study. Perhaps an even greater positive aspect of the collaborative learning model used here is the discipline that it introduced into the educational process resulting in a more adequate mastery of the subject matter and manifesting itself in better classroom attendance. Future classes and attempts to sample other aspects of the educational process involved in collaborative learning will, no doubt, throw more light on the nature of student-teacher interaction and the reasons for the findings in this study.

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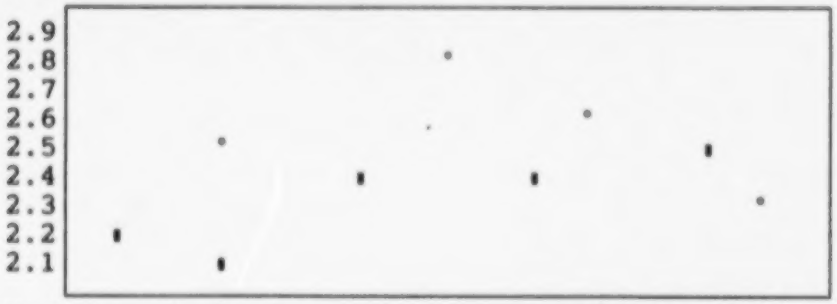
Figure 1: Attitudinal Survey: Mean score



° - Methods of TESL Class; ' Grammar class

Table 1: Correlation of Teacher and Student Grades - Methods of TESL Class - Fall 1989 Using Kendall TAU B

Quizzes to Midterm Exam	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
SGRAD	48	4.691	.493	3	5
TGRAD	48	4.683	.475	3	5

Mean Rank	Variable	
1.49	SGRAD	Student Grades on Final E548 1989
1.51	TGRAD	Teacher Grades on Final E548 1989

Statistic	Value	Significance
Kendall's Tau B	.71712	.0000***

One-tailed Significance * - .05; ** - .01; *** - .001

Table 2: Correlation of Teacher and Student Grades - Methods of TESL Class - Fall 1989 Using Kendall TAU B

Quizzes from Midterm Exam to Final	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
SGRAD	105	4.891	.153	4	5
TGRAD	105	4.856	.222	4	5

Mean Rank	Variable	
1.51	SGRAD	Student Grades on quizzes after Midterm
1.49	TGRAD	Teacher Grades on quizzes after Midterm

Statistic	Value	Significance
Kendall's Tau B	.57135	.0000***

One-tailed Significance * - .05; ** - .01; *** - .001

Table 3: Correlation of Student and Teacher Grades on Mid-term and Final Exam Using Kendall's TAU - B

SGRAD - Student Grades on Mid-term Fall ENG485 1989
TGRAD - Teacher Grades on Mid-term Fall ENG485 1989

	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
SGRAD	25	17.568	2.865	10	20
TGRAD	25	17.612	2.234	10	20

Mean Rank	Variable	
1.54	SGRAD	Student Grades on Midterm E548 1989
1.46	TGRAD	Teacher Grades on Midterm E548 1989

Statistic	Value	Significance
Kendall's Tau B	.71379	.0000***

SGRAD - Student Grades on Final Fall ENG485 1989
TGRAD - Teacher Grades on Final Fall ENG485 1989

	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
SGRAD	24	19.175	1.242	15	20
TGRAD	24	18.304	1.166	16	20

Mean Rank	Variable	
1.77	SGRAD	Student Grades on Final E548 1989
1.23	TGRAD	Teacher Grades on Final E548 1989

	Value	Significance
Kendall's Tau B	.35497	.0131**

One-tailed Significance * - .05; ** - .01; *** - .001

Table 4: Student scores on daily quizzes

Name	Student Grading Grade	Teacher Grade	Credit	
January 25, 1989 Activity #1				
Baker, James	4	0	0	2
Edgewater, Teri	4.2	4.6	4.4	7
Foxglove, Luke	5	0	0	0
Geldwesser, Barry	4.5	0	0	2

Table 5: Daily quiz report for students

GELDWESSER

SG = Student Grade, G = Grading TG = Teacher Grade, X= Other

	SG	GR	TG	X	Total	Adj. Total*
10 - 03-03-1989	5	0	3.5	7	114.9	218

Your adjustment is based on 12 scores out of 36 scores at 3.

*Adjusted Total

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviations of Averge Scores on Attitudinal Survey for ENG 485 Methods of TESL

Variable	Cases	Mean	Std Dev
ITEMA	4	2.9500	.2380
ITEMB	4	2.8000	.2582
ITEMC	4	2.3750	.2630
ITEMD	4	3.0750	.2986
ITEME	4	2.5000	.4546
ITEMF	4	2.6250	.4031
ITEMG	4	2.6500	.2887
ITEMH	4	2.0250	.0957
ITEMI	4	2.0500	.2517

Table 7: Factor Analysis of Items on Attitudinal Survey

Analysis Number 1 Listwise deletion of cases with missing values
Extraction 1 for Analysis 1, Principal-Components Analysis (PC)

Initial Statistics:

Variable	Communality	*	Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct of Var	Cum Pct
ITEME	1.00000	*	1	5.37708	59.7	59.7
ITEMB	1.00000	*	2	2.40125	26.7	86.4
ITEMF	1.00000	*	3	1.22167	13.6	100.0
ITEMC	1.00000	*				
ITEMI	1.00000	*				
ITEMG	1.00000	*				
ITEMH	1.00000	*				
ITEMD	1.00000	*				
ITEMA	1.00000	*				

PC Extracted 3 factors.

Appendix I: Attitudinal Survey

JWNey Attitudinal Survey: English 485 Assignment date: 9/21/89

Respond to each of the statements by checking the item that you feel is right and by circling the number in front of it.

A. The subject matter of this course is presented in an interesting and challenging manner.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.
__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.

B. The conduct of the class is helpful; it helps me in the mastery of the subject matter.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.
__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.

C. Grading the quizzes and essays gives me an appreciation of the work that other students are doing.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.
__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.

D. My level of frustration is low; I find the conduct of the class satisfying and of interest in itself.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.
__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.

E. It is a good experience for me to grade the quizzes and essays of other students; it helps me master the subject matter.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.
__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.

F. It helps me a lot to have another student going over the material in the assigned reading.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.
__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.

G. The instructor's participation in the class keeps the class running smoothly and insures maximum student involvement.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.

__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.

H. I like to receive daily reports of my standing in the ENG 485 Methods of TESL class this fall.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.
__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.

I. Studying for the exams and the daily quizzes helps me to write better answers to questions on TESL.

__1. I strongly agree. __2. I agree.
__3. I have no opinion on the matter.
__4. I disagree. __5. I strongly disagree.